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United States Mission to the OSCE

Reply to the Russian Federation on U.S. opposition to a UN resolution on Combating the Glorification of Nazis

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires, a.i. Harry Kamian
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
November 23, 2017

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Since my esteemed colleague from the Russian Federation raised the U.S. opposition to a UN resolution on Combating the Glorification of Nazis, I would like to state our clear position and correct any possible misrepresentation.

The United States condemns the glorification of Nazism and all modern forms of racism, xenophobia, discrimination, and related intolerance. The United States is an active partner in promoting remembrance of the Holocaust and other genocides worldwide, and continues to lead efforts to bring perpetrators of these and other atrocity crimes to justice.

More broadly, the United States condemns without reservation all forms of religious and ethnic intolerance or hatred at home and around the world.

However, due to the UN resolution's overly narrow scope and politicized nature, and because it calls for unacceptable limits on the fundamental freedom of expression, the United States could not support it. While we share concerns over the rise in hate speech around the globe, this resolution's recommendations to limit freedom of expression, freedom of association, and the right to peaceful assembly contravene the principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and our own U.S. Constitution. We cannot support efforts at the UN that directly contravene these fundamental freedoms and U.S. law.

The answer to combating the glorification of Nazism is not to curb the freedoms of expression, association, and peaceful assembly. The best way to counteract offensive speech is with more speech, not limits on human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Given the challenges of the modern world, we regret that this resolution was so narrow in scope. We were also concerned that Russia continues to use this resolution to carry out political attacks against its neighbors.

Finally, Mr. Chair, I'd like to underscore that our shared commitment to respect the inherent dignity of the human person, common decency, and the lessons of history require us to condemn and combat hate in all of its ugly forms. There can be no place among us for anti-Semitism, anti-Muslim and anti-Christian discrimination, or anti-Roma or other racist

sentiment. There can be no room for hate crimes against members of these and other communities, such as LGBTI individuals, migrants, and persons with disabilities.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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